

## Take Away – The Jesus Story: Live the Paradox

Text: Mark 8: 31 – 9: 1

Date: 3-7-21



### With your group...

Answer each of the following questions prompted by today's sermon.

1. A paradox is “a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true.” What is the most paradoxical statement you can think of?
2. What does “cancel culture” mean in your own words?
3. In your opinion, why has the “cancel culture” become such a big thing in America? Why can it be so dangerous and damaging to advancing the cause of Christ?
4. For each paradox, discuss how each seemingly polar opposite statement is true:
  - a. “The last shall be first, and the first last.” (Jesus Christ in Matthew 20:13).
  - b. There is “strength through weakness” (St. Paul in 2 Cor. 12:10)
  - c. “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” (Martin Luther)
  - d. Christians are “simultaneously saint and sinner.”
  - e. God is both *hidden and revealed*.
  - f. Jesus is both *God and man*.
  - g. The simple elements of bread and wine are, at the same time, Jesus’ *body and blood*.
5. In Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis is quoted, “You have noticed, I expect, that Christ Himself sometimes describes the Christian way as very hard, sometimes as very easy. He says, “Take up your Cross”—in other words, it is like going to be beaten to death in a concentration camp. Next minute he says, “My yoke is easy and my burden light.” He means both.” How can Christ mean both?
6. React to: “Jesus’ words are not license for self-loathing and demeaning self-talk. Here is the beauty of Jesus’ invitation to “deny yourself” - when you deny yourself Jesus gets permission to define you. Jesus tells you who you really are! I would much rather have Jesus giving me my identity as His child, than listen to myself and the world try to define my identity.”
7. Do you agree or disagree? Why? “Human beings are hard wired to need a cause worth dying for! You won’t truly live until you find something worth dying for.”
8. Read Mark 8:35-37 – 35 and then discuss Pastor’s encouragement: “This is why you come to church! You come to church to be sent out to *be* the church. You need to be reminded that this world is fading. It will soon be gone. You come to church to be repent of worry over the things of this world. You come to church to surrender your desire for control to the God who holds you and all things in His

hands. You come to church to embrace the paradox of gaining through losing. Lose your life and you'll find it."

9. React to: "Let me take the pressure off. You do not have to convert people and "win" them for eternity. That is the Holy Spirit's job to convert - Jesus has done the work. Many of you are frustrated because you feel the biblical worldview is being squelched by relativism. You lament the lack of absolute truth. It can often feel like you want to "win" a worldview debate, rather than "win" a friend whom the Holy Spirit is pursuing."

### **With your kids...**

1. What is a paradox?
2. How does it feel when someone won't speak to you because they disagree with you? What can you do to get the relationship back to being a good one?
3. What does it mean when the Bible says that there is "strength through weakness" (St. Paul in 2 Cor. 12:10)?
4. Name one person who is not currently a close friend that you feel you could listen and learn from.

### **On your own...**

10. Pray over, reflect on, and answer each of these challenge questions from Pastor: Who is your one? Who is Jesus calling you to love by listening and learning...especially if they have differing beliefs from your own? How can you die to self and live for Christ with them?
5. You are encouraged to read the book of Mark over the 16 weeks of this sermon series. This week read Mark 8. Write down at least 3 important points to focus on this week.
6. What is the one thing Jesus is uniquely calling you to do after hearing this message? Ask Him in prayer. He will let you know. Then act. Hear the call.